

July 12, 2004

EDUCATIONAL AWARENESS FORUM  
Historic Lincoln Park  
July 10, 2004

An information forum was held on Saturday, July 10, 2004, at the Clinton A.M.E. Zion Church in Lincoln Park, Rockville, from 12 – 3 pm. Refreshments and lunch were served at the end of the presentation and discussion. Approximately 30 people attended.

The Educational Awareness Forum was organized by Anita Neal-Powell, President of the Lincoln Park Historical Foundation, Inc., to provide information to the community about the upcoming City-sponsored efforts to preserve Lincoln Park. The moderator for the meeting was Mr. Russell Campbell, Chairman of the Smithville School Museum.

Mr. Campbell opened the meeting with a brief review of the agenda, and a note that questions would be taken after each speaker, and there would also be time at the end of the presentations for further questions and comments. [The note taker did not catch all the names of those with questions and comments. Questions and answers will be noted as “Q” and “A.”]

Pastor Grant opened with a prayer.

1. Ms. Beth Rodgers (former Chair of the Rockville Historic District Commission) spoke on “The Features and Benefits of Rockville’s Historic Communities”:

Ms. Rodgers gave an overview of the history of Lincoln Park and types of designation in response to the request of the Lincoln Park Civic Association and Peerless Rockville to request listing on the National Register of Historic Places. She noted that only ten original Lincoln Park structures remain and presented a brief summary of requirements and benefits of local and national register districts. Some examples of requirements in current historic districts, such as replacing windows with wood windows and discouragement of vinyl materials were mentioned. Tax credits are available to reduce the extra cost of replicating original design in original materials. Ms. Rodgers stated that original buildings are a physical link to past memories and experiences and are valuable to the community. She urged attendees to get facts, write down their history of Lincoln Park, and become involved in the decision making process. (Ms. Rodger’s remarks are attached.)

Q: Ms. Rodgers has mis-represented the Civic Association’s efforts to preserve Lincoln Park. Their Goal is to try to design a process to let the community see what’s in their best interest. But Lincoln Park hasn’t even discussed what to do yet. They want to create a preservation plan that’s best for Lincoln Park, and that process **begins** on July 20<sup>th</sup>.”

Q: Are there going to be minutes of this meeting? Can we review them?

A: City Staff – Historic Preservation Planner, Robin Ziek - in the audience will take minutes and circulate them.

2. Ms. Julia O’Malley (Chair, Historic Preservation Commission, Montgomery County) spoke with an “Overview of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission”:

Ms. O'Malley cited several county historic districts and said that designation with specific guidelines had proven to be an effective tool to keep change compatible with the existing area. She noted that undesignated portions of Chevy Chase were greatly impacted by teardowns and large house construction that affected drainage and light for neighboring houses, as well as loss of vegetation and mature trees. She noted that design guidelines were crafted to fit each district and in Takoma Park, for instance, changes in the rear of the property that could not be seen from the public way was not regulated. (Ms. O'Malley's remarks are attached.)

*Q: What if you don't want your house designated? Do you have to do it?*

A: In the County, a property can be designated over the owner's objection. They have different levels of review to respond to the varying historic significance of the property: Outstanding, Contributing, Non-Contributing.

*Q: Say a property is historic, can you still tear it down and rebuild? If your house is condemned, for example, would you have to build a specific model?*

A: For the County, they try to avoid demolition of historic buildings. They work with the property owner to find another route, like making repairs and building additions to the property that would still maintain street character.

*Q: Is the whole community considered historic? My house is only 39 years old.*

A: The County follows the 50-year rule as the starting point for determining whether or not something is historic. In a historic district, her home would likely be considered non-contributing.

*Q: Are we subject to the City, County and State?*

A: The City, and the State.

### 3. Jim Wasilak, Chief of Long-Range Planning

Mr. Wasilak presented the Draft Lincoln Park Neighborhood Plan, which has been in development over the past two years. This was an outcome of the Town Center Master Plan over 4 years ago, which included the Stonestreet Avenue corridor and led to the updating of plans for the neighborhoods most effected by Town Center re-development: Lincoln Park and East Rockville. These plans were over 20 years old anyway, and needed to be revisited. [The East Rockville Neighborhood Plan has been approved by the Mayor & Council, and has moved into a second phase addressing specific concerns such as zoning along Stonestreet.]

The Neighborhood Plan was designed to incorporate community input, with the Neighborhood Advisory Group (appointed by the Mayor & Council). A stated goal of the draft plan was to maintain and enhance Lincoln Park as a stable and secure community. The Advisory Group looked at the land use in and around Lincoln Park, and it looked at Historic Preservation tools.

The aerial photo shows Lincoln Park as a tree-lined community, surrounded by open development without trees – very different. Note that Lincoln Park was historically part of a larger semi-rural area and has already been encroached upon.

The Neighborhood Plan strongly supports residential land use. There are a few large properties available for re-development:

- a) The Board of Education property along Stonestreet (on both sides of the street). The school board may do something in the future, but is not under any pressure at this time to move

forward. The Neighborhood Plan reinforces that this is zoned R-60, with single family detached and attached homes, on 6,000 sf lots. This is smaller than the typical Lincoln Park lot, but they will match up the two sides of the street with detached homes.

b) The WINX property at the end of Stonestreet – presently in the County and zoned industrial. The property can not get water and sewer if it stays in the County, so the City and the County agree that this property should be annexed by the City and brought in and re-zoned as residential. Again, there would be a mix of detached and attached single family homes, but the detached would match the detached along Ashley.

c) Lincoln Terrace – this is currently public housing, and the plan is going forward to re-develop as a mixture of detached and attached single family homes for owner-occupied affordable housing.

d) Property east of Horners Lane – currently zoned Industrial. The plan recommends landscape buffers to make it compatible with the residential area of Lincoln Park.

The Plan retains R-60 zoning: The churches are institutional uses that are permitted in residential zones. However, no new commercial is permitted and some older industrial and institutional is planned to revert to residential when redeveloped.

Environment Section – to preserve as much tree cover as possible, including addressing how trees will be managed, and replaced. There is a lot of public land in Lincoln Park (roads, parks, sidewalks, etc) and the Plan supports a Management Plan to address this issue.

Transportation: Cut-through traffic is a problem now, especially with the industrial development along Southlawn Lane causing commercial cut-through traffic. Pedestrian cross-walks were installed this year along North Horners Lane, and Department of Public Works (DPW) is looking at other traffic calming measures, including directing commercial traffic along another route.

Stonestreet will become mixed-use instead of just industrial. It will be designed as a “boulevard” with plantings in the middle and wide sidewalks. There is a traffic circle planned just south of Lincoln Avenue, to help keep the traffic off of the residential streets.

Judy Christensen worked with the Neighborhood Advisory Group, and the community will now work with City staff to develop a neighborhood preservation plan. The survey of buildings is currently underway [50% complete] to identify existing conditions and what is currently built in Lincoln Park. The Advisory Group supported preservation of the residential character of the area. She showed a map with property dates in different colors to show the distribution of buildings by date. This is an eclectic neighborhood in terms of date and size, but the history (social and cultural) is more important to defining this area. So, considering Lincoln Park as a whole, the July 20<sup>th</sup> “kick-off” meeting is the start of the process to determine what is the best way to proceed with preservation.

4. Judy Christensen (Historic Preservation Planner, City of Rockville), talked about “The Role and Responsibility of the Rockville Historic District Commission”:

Lincoln Park was found eligible for listing on the National Register in 1991 by the State of Maryland. The City has been working for the past two years to consider ways to preserve the character of Lincoln Park. The language from the Civic Association was to explore options: the Draft Neighborhood Plan identified four established historic preservation tools that could be used:

1. National Register listing: This is honorary, there's no reviews for alterations, but there is the possibility for tax credits (20% of approved work) if your proposal is reviewed at the State level by the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and local property tax credits of 10% of exterior improvements.
2. Local Historic Designation: Alterations are reviewed by the City's HDC. State and county tax credits (10%) apply if improvements and maintenance is eligible.
3. Easements: especially designed to save open space by donating the right to build new homes in return for tax credits. This also lowers property taxes while you retain ownership and use of the land (except to build a new house).
4. Neighborhood Conservation District: This would include all of Lincoln Park as well as the school property on Stonestreet (because of the future impact by development of this site). There are examples in Annapolis of Conservation Districts – they are each different, with unique guidelines crafted to address neighborhood concerns.

Lincoln Park has a scattering of the older properties, with a history over 100 years old. It is very different from the newer subdivisions with small lots and identical houses. Lincoln Park was designed to accommodate well and septic fields on the properties, farm animals and garden space. There are irregular setbacks, varying sizes and styles of homes. Lincoln Park is a significant part of the City's history. The final preservation recommendations may include development of walking tours, placement of historic markers, a book, and other means.

The Community does not want gentrification, or limitations on the ability to rebuild. One possibility that has been considered is to designate the entire community as a local district with conservation-district style guidelines to preserve the deep lots, large trees, through streets, lack of pipestem lots, and the variety of homes. Such preservation is possible with district-specific guidelines. It would take two years or more to add a zoning overlay category for "Conservation District" zoning. Any such zoning could potentially be implemented anywhere in the City so all Homeowner's Associations, and property owners could be affected. At some time Conservation District zoning may be added, but it would not be in time to protect Lincoln Park. Staff is thinking that the existing historic district zoning could be utilized as a base, and the best features of historic districts and conversation districts could be used.

The need for some preservation action is illustrated by new homes going up now in Lincoln Park on previously vacant lots. One is on Lincoln Avenue and another on Spring Avenue. Both are two and a half story houses with projecting front garages. They are double the size of adjacent houses, which are not large by today's standards, but typical of their time. The older houses are very different in character with their small footprint and individual garage buildings and other outbuildings at the rear of the house. Guidelines could specify detached garages or set back garages to help keep the apparent size of the homes down, and be more compatible with existing homes. Lincoln Park is eclectic enough to accommodate several 21<sup>st</sup> Century homes. The problem is tearing down existing homes and creating a Kentlands or King Farm setting.

Come to the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, to help develop a wish list of things people value in Lincoln Park. Right now, every door is open. This is just the beginning. Peerless Rockville is a co-sponsor and they have a lot of experience with "the system."

*Q: If you demolish a house, or there is a fire, would you have to rebuild in a specific style?*

A: No, but at least the new house would have to be compatible with its neighbors.

*Q: Does everyone have to agree to be designated?*

A: To be listed in the National Register, the majority has to agree. This is not required in the City, but the City feels the same.

*Q: If a house is designated, what is the process?*

A: Using the Reuben Hill House on Lincoln Avenue as an example, the family knew they were going to sell the property but wanted to protect it because they thought it was historically significant. The new owner is from England, and he has come to the HDC for approval to do some small modifications, mostly to the garage. He's updating this, and was able to replace the garage windows since they were deteriorated.

*Q: What documentation is there that the Lincoln Park community is historic?*

A: The City received a history from the state (MHT). See the City's web site and coloring book for more information. The MHT (1991) determination is largely based on cultural and historical reasons. Now, the City is currently undertaking a building-by-building survey, and collecting oral histories and site histories.

*Q: What's the time frame for this work?*

A: This is a political process. This should extend into 2005 to develop a plan that addresses most people's concerns. Judy also noted that the community will change whether we like it or not. For example, in the west part of town, a lot with a house was sold for \$350,000 to tear down the existing home and build a new house! This will also happen in Lincoln Park. So the question becomes how can we best preserve this community? It will change by default or by design. Which will it be?

*Q: Where can we see the 1991 MHT determination of NR eligibility?*

A: On the City's web site.

Comment: The Civic Association meets every 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday, and they have been discussing this at every meeting for the past while.

Comment: For those who have lived here a long time, it was historically an all-black community, but now has many ethnic groups represented. There have been many changes over the past 30 years. When this church was still on Monroe Street in the '70s, someone recommended no more Section 8 housing in Lincoln Park! It's also been a target for industrial and commercial groups to the detriment of the residential character. Gentrification is a problem, and could lead to everyone moving out! It's ok to have other people move in, but we are interested in trying to keep the neighborhood together and historic designation can do that.

5. Wayne Goldstein (President of Montgomery Preservation Inc., and First Vice President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation) spoke about "Teardowns and Build Ups":

Mr. Goldstein noted that this has been happening over the past 10 years, all over the country. It's a "trend" to demolish older homes and build very large new homes, or to build very large additions onto an older home. The new building will be 2 and 3 times larger than the original home, with the resulting loss of trees, loss of sun as the new home overshadows existing homes to either side, run-off from the new home resulting in flooding at existing homes, compaction of soils to hurt garden areas, and loss of privacy.

This sometimes makes the existing homes seem out of place. Bethesda has been targeted, and people are trying to use historic preservation tools to prevent the teardowns. MPI sponsored a day-long conference on this subject that was well attended. The community speaks out against those who just see these long-standing communities as “land adjacent to metro.” They are not interested in the community and entire streets will change. There is a loss of pride in the old homes through the changing and overpowering scale of the new homes. Property taxes go up. Alternatives include overlay zones, such as was developed in Garrett Park, to control/moderate change. Annapolis has used Conservation Districts since 1990. These follow certain principles of neighborhood conservation. Change will happen, with \$1million homes and large homes coming to Lincoln Park due to its situation near the Metro.

*Q: Will the size of the lots at Lincoln Park prevent teardowns? Don't regulations help?*

A: In Rockville, heights are counted to the mid-point of the roof. Setbacks for the new homes are taken to the maximum, whereas in the past, homes were built well within the allowable setbacks (smaller homes and larger gardens). Heights are determined by the level of the street, so contractors may not build terraces [to get additional height or above-ground garages.]

NOTE: July 15<sup>th</sup> is the next Advisory Committee Meeting.

July 20<sup>th</sup> – Historic Preservation information kick-off meeting.

July 26<sup>th</sup> – Lincoln Park neighborhood presented to Mayor & Council for authorization to file the Map Amendment and begin the study period.

Ms. Christensen noted that this was backwards from the way the Mayor & Council usually operate, because they felt some urgency to bring this to the community and address the pressures working against the community. Usually the M&C get a Map Amendment when all the research and recommendations have been completed. In this case, the Mayor and Council is being asked to endorse the study period to allow the community to address the issues, concerns and come up with a community preservation plan they can support. The direction to file the Map Amendment does give the neighborhood interim protection against teardowns and mansionization by putting the neighborhood study period in priority position.

Mr. Goldstein noted that, in 1978, the County instituted an 18-month moratorium on demolitions to provide county staff with time to research and write their preservation law. The Mayor and Council may wish to do something similar.

*Q: What is the effect/advantage of making Lincoln Park an historic district? She was asked to find out by older people who couldn't attend this meeting.*

A: Please come to the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting. Lincoln Park should think about how it will look in 25 years. What do you want? What should go in guidelines? Talk to Fran Hawkins and Wilma Beall, officers of the Civic Association, and Peerless Rockville, all of whom have been working on this over the past years. If we don't work together, we won't accomplish anything!

*Q: As an example, considering the age of the black community in Sandy Spring, why didn't they get designated as historic?*

A: The County HPC tried to designate a large historic district in Sandy Spring, but the community was very much against it. Only a small historic district was designated to include the Quaker Meeting House, the Bank and the Insurance Company (three important local institutions). Now, the community is very unhappy about all the new development that is overwhelming them with new large homes (\$800,000 and up), traffic, and new people who don't really like the country (dark nights, creepy-crawly animals, farming activities and noises). The changes are coming and everyone is sad.

Mr. Campbell: Please note that the July 26<sup>th</sup> Map Amendment coming up to the Mayor and Council starts the process to designate what the community decides. Let's decide! Get involved. Make a difference. Contribute. He was involved in a designation of 16 blocks in Detroit and most people wanted it. This can happen if you stay involved. Tell your neighbors, and speak up. Do you mind if someone tells you what you can or can't do at your property? There are advantages and consequences. Find out what these are and make the best decision. There are 900 people in Lincoln Park, and a good 30 present today...get involved!

Comment: Lincoln Park is being empowered by this. This is about us taking charge of our own destiny! We are in charge. We can make a difference. We've always done this and we are still doing it! This is our ballgame, and a chance to design how we want to live.

**July 20<sup>th</sup>: meeting starts at 7:30 pm at the Lincoln Park Civic Center.**

**July 26<sup>th</sup>: meeting starts at 7 pm at City Hall.**

*Q: What about renters? Do they have rights regarding this issue?*

A: The City generally considers the Owner of Record. However, renters can make comments and get involved and make a difference by being heard.

*Q: What about Lincoln Avenue and Stonestreet – Board of Education property? Traffic moves too fast. Put in more homes and it could get worse.*

A: [See above] - Single family detached and attached homes are envisioned; traffic calming devices, such as a traffic circle, are proposed to help make things safer.

*Q: What about WINX property?*

A: [See above] – While county has jurisdiction, property is zoned industrial. If and when the City annexes the property, it is planned for single-family (detached and attached) homes.

*Q: What about Unity Bridge? There are few connections out of Lincoln Park.*

A: The bridge will remain. The City is looking at additional connections to the north and south of Lincoln Park.

6. Anita Neal Powell (President, Lincoln Park Historical Foundation, Inc.):

Ms. Powell concurred that Lincoln Park has a unique history and some measures to preserve it should be taken. She noted that there are a number of methods available and some are more restrictive than others and may cost residents more money to maintain and improve their properties. She urged attendees to get information and attend the Mayor and Council meeting on July 26 and state their opinions.

7. Mr. Russell Campbell thanked those attending for participating and asked them to inform their neighbors.

ATTACHMENTS

Remarks by Beth Rodgers, former Rockville HDC Commissioner  
July 10, 2004

Good Afternoon. I have been asked to give an overview of the features and benefits of historic districts. We know that Lincoln Park is an historic neighborhood that has been part of the fabric of Rockville for over a hundred years. Five black families were already living here when William Wallace Welsh bought land in the 1890's specifically for sale to black families. Some of those families are still here and include Davis, Shelton, Duffin and Johnson, but less than ten of the 53 original homes remain. We are here to examine how best to showcase and protect the Lincoln Park community.

The Lincoln Park Civic Association is currently working with the City's Historic District Commission staff and Peerless Rockville to place Lincoln Park on the National Register of Historic Places. This will provide pride of ownership and recognition and may increase property values. Placement on the National Register will not require any sort of review for changes made, although there can be a review, or necessarily protect the property from demolition. The WINX building is an example of a Rockville building that has been included on the National Register, but not protected from demolition.

Historic designation provides additional protection and stricter requirements for change. For example vinyl windows might not be approved as a replacement for old wooden windows. However the additional cost may be offset by a tax credit of up to 25% of the total cost. There may be additional tax credit benefits and it is best to address the HDC staff with any questions. They can be reached by calling City Hall. All permanent exterior changes would have to be approved by the HDC commissioners. This would not include paint color.

Buildings with historic designation make up Rockville's historic districts. An historic district is created from a contiguous group of buildings and environmental settings. It is established to protect the architectural and social features of that community. The purpose of historic districts is to improve property values and the local economy while protecting the traditional features and values of that community.

Some historic resources are important enough to become single site landmarks. Lincoln Park High School is an excellent example of this, a Rosenwald school from 1935-1951 it is the oldest remaining black high school in the county and marks an era. After many years of hard work it has been transformed into a place of worship for the community. When I visited it on one of Anita's tours I noted how those who had attended school there were recalling exactly where their classes were and where the principal's office was. This building can instantly connect people to the past while still serving them in the present. This is what preservation is all about. Like Carver, it also reminds the entire community that segregation was part of the childhood of many of our citizens by keeping that part of Rockville's history real. Historic designation is called a map amendment overlay because it does not affect the property zoning.

Sometimes communities feel that historic designation is not best for them. They may feel that the restrictions outweigh the tax credits. East Rockville has been working with the City to create customized guidelines instead. The community can then establish their own less strict requirements for structural changes. This is often a more business-friendly approach to preservation. Guidelines can be useful in controlling proposed growth by defining the neighborhood's vision. Once approved, the community would provide their own review on most changes. Guidelines by themselves would not generate tax credits.



I mentioned that only a handful of Lincoln Park's original homes still exist. The loss of some of these buildings prompted the HDC commissioners to request that the City allow for a review of any building more than 50 years old before a demolition permit can be issued. Another house at 325 Lincoln Avenue was lost after that because it was a hardship case. It was historically significant as one of the oldest intact houses in the community and former home to Montgomery County's first black sheriff. The HDC commissioners found that it met the criteria for designation and two architects found it structurally sound. The County needs to make hardship relief compatible with historic preservation. The City still needs a more effective demolition and hardship policy. Wayne Goldstein of Montgomery Preservation Inc will suggest other ways of addressing the trend called teardowns where small houses on large lots are replaced by large houses or several houses.

Rockville takes a lot of pride in its historic districts. You can see that from the signs on I 270 and throughout town advertising them. The largest is the West Montgomery district showcasing the Victorian houses that marked the sophistication that arrived with the B&O Railroad. The B&O and Wire Hardware District illustrates the growth of commerce at that time. The Dawson Farmhouse and Park remind us of our agricultural beginnings. Other districts include Courthouse Square, S. Washington Street and the Sante House on Beall Avenue. That sense of pride and longevity may be stronger in Lincoln Park than in any of the other neighborhoods I just mentioned.

Lincoln Park represents old Rockville families who know several generations of their neighbors. The community represents the development of diversity in Montgomery County while maintaining its integrity. For me, Lincoln Park's past began to come alive as Reverend Davis drove his bus and told stories of local basketball games and a frightening train wreck. The churches and businesses that have been here reinforce the connections that make this a true community. Some of these businesses are Johnny's Market and Hick's Barbershop. Historic significance is determined by connecting a place to an important person, time or event within the community. I would like to take this opportunity to urge all of you to write something about a place in Lincoln Park and what makes it important to your sense of community. These details provide some of the historic significance of this community that will otherwise be lost. Think about the features of your neighborhood that are important enough to save and share with your children and grandchildren. This can include community events and holiday traditions as well as the places and people involved.

The trees, yards, parks and cemeteries tell part of the story of this neighborhood as well. Lincoln Park was created with long narrow lots to accommodate gardens and wells. Large trees that shade the houses contribute to the overall setting and also take us back in time. Any preservation plan must include the protection of the natural historic resources as well as the manmade ones.

The Rueben Hill House at 305 Lincoln Avenue received landmark designation several years ago. A few other individual structures are currently protected. This is not enough to preserve the neighborhood atmosphere and to maintain the eclectic character that the residents love as the Rockville Town Center expands. Parking, lighting and traffic will remain issues with no easy answers and the Stonestreet corridor will become more developed. I hope you all use this opportunity to provide input on how to define and preserve Lincoln Park as Rockville continues to grow.

## Lincoln Park Forum

Good afternoon. I'm Julie O'Malley and I'm the Chair of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission. As a County Commission we review the designations and work permits for more than 2400 historic resources in Montgomery County. There are several other Historic Commissions in the county, and one of these is the Rockville's Historic District Commission, which reviews Rockville sites. Rockville City is separate from our County review process because it has its own Historic District Commission. I would like to give you an overview of how the County Commission works with a brief explanation of our process. Later Judy Christensen will give you information about the specifics of the Rockville Historic District Commission, which would review the Lincoln Park area.

What is historic preservation all about? Why would you want to become a Historic District? Some say that you have to know where you've been, to know where you're going. Historic preservation helps people understand the forces that shaped their history. Old buildings make a place unique and having this sense of place is important to residents. Visible reminders of the past create a rich and varied historic landscape in sharp contrast with the modern development occurring today. These reminders need not be grand or architecturally exceptional to be important to history. The pocket of history that is Lincoln Park contributes to the overall picture and to the understanding of the development of this county. It's by creating these links that we can help to understand this history...and what a unique history this community has.

Well, what does being designated as a historic district mean to you exactly? It's protection for the history that your community represents. It protects you from someone coming in and demolishing houses, which are an important part of that historic fabric. It protects you from someone coming in and building something that detracts from the historic character and is not compatible with your community. How does it affect you and your plans for your property? Well, the same as your neighbors, you will need to come to the Rockville Historic District Commission and get a permit to make changes to your property. This would only be true of the exterior of your structure. The Rockville Historic District Commission doesn't review interior changes. When you apply for a permit you'll work with the staff who will help you in this process. Your application is then reviewed by the commission. There is no fee for this Historic Area Work Permit. In the County, we end up approving 97% of the applications. Problems arise mostly when applicants are not aware of the defining features or important characteristics of their property, and bring in completed plans without working with the staff early on in the process.

When you bring in a work permit application to the commission, the commissioners have specific criteria on which to base their decisions. The County commission uses two main sources for evaluating projects or changes. We have the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and we have the Montgomery County Code, Chapter 24 A. In addition to these, many of the County's 20 historic districts have created their own district specific guidelines at the time of designation or at a later time. These guidelines are worked out with the staff and the community or with consultants, listing the specific aspects that are important to preserving the character of their district. For example, it could include street layout, a neighborhood development pattern, the streetscape, house styles, setbacks from the street, lot coverage, height of the buildings... whatever it is that is determined to be significant for your particular district. So what is it that makes your community special? What are these character defining features? What makes it different from the surrounding area and how has it survived like this for over 100 years? How can you preserve the character of your community so that it doesn't get lost in suburbia and lose its special historic value? As you think through the answers to these questions, and with the help of the professional commission staff you can begin the process of defining your community's guidelines.

When our County Commission reviews applications we give great weight to the local guidelines that have been adopted. They might specify that any changes to the back of the building should be approved as a matter of course. Or that certain changes to the sides should get "lenient" review. Or that simple specified changes don't need any review. And so on...In this way, you can shape the guidelines to specifically fit your community. This greatly helps the commission in determining how to best preserve those features of your community which make it what it is. But the guidelines especially help the residents be aware of the important elements that should be preserved. These guidelines are invaluable in helping you in the planning stages for changes you might wish to make. We do not require historic area work permits for any interior work, only exterior.

The staff is always available to discuss ideas with owners. And the owners are encouraged to come to the commission for a preliminary meeting if they want to make big changes. When an owner comes in with an application, we are required by law to complete the process in 45 days. Often it can be completed in 21 days. There is **no** charge for the free architectural advice, and **no** charge for the permit. Any work on a property which is repairing what is there or simple maintenance or is entirely interior requires no historic area permit although there might be county permits required. Similarly, even when no county permit is required, you might need an historic area permit... for example: replacing siding or windows.

Like all other properties, historic properties require maintenance and repair. As stewards of a historic resource you have a special responsibility. If you do routine maintenance or restoration work you do not need a Historic Area Work Permit. Being in a historic district means there are special tax credits to encourage maintenance, repairs and restoration. For example, when you replace a roof or repair a wood frame window or porch railing and the total costs exceeds \$1000 in one year, you can apply for a tax rebate of 10 % from the county. If you are restoring your property and have your plans approved by the Maryland Historical Trust before you start work, you can receive an additional 20 % in tax rebates. If this exceeds your tax bill or if you are a non-profit, it is possible to receive cash instead of a rebate through the State program only.

How do you have your neighborhood designated as an historic district? The historic designation process starts with potential historic resources being identified and listed on the County's Locational Atlas. In the County scenario, during the time that your property is listed on the Atlas you would only come in to the commission for review if you were making changes that are considered "substantial alterations" to your property. The next step involves County Historic Preservation staff researching the properties or districts on the atlas and making a recommendation as to whether they should be added to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation. The commission then evaluates whether a property or a district meets the designation criteria listed in the County Code and if they believe it does, they recommend it to the Montgomery County Planning Board, who then would recommend it to the County Council to be added to the County's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. So as you can see, being placed on the Inventory or Atlas is just the first step in a process and there are public hearings along the way where the residents and communities can have input.

The question often arises whether to designate the entire community as a district or to select individual resources for designation. An individual resource is always understood better in the context of its environmental setting. I would have to say that the added advantage of having the entire district designated is that it gives the resources more protection. Every owner will have to go through the same process for review, but the protection that affords will extend to every property owner. In other words, you will be protected from inappropriate actions on your neighbor's part.

Something else to consider is that the State has changed their Building Rehabilitation Code called "Smart Codes" to make rehabilitation projects more predictable and affordable. As I understand it, these codes now spell out many advantages where specific work does not have to be brought up to the code required for new buildings, but can pass inspection if it is providing the same or higher level of compliance or safety that currently existed. This can be specifically helpful for historic resources where the code for new construction might be in conflict with historic preservation goals.

Historic preservation adds value to the lives of Montgomery County residents in many ways – an appreciation of local history, the stabilization of a neighborhood, the protection of a community. As you are stewards of your community's history, you create a link with the past. It's exciting to be a part of preserving this heritage and I wish you the best of luck as you proceed through the process.

Thank you.  
Julie O'Malley  
7/10/04

Comments to Lincoln Park Residents on the Future of Their Community -  
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My name is Wayne Goldstein. As President of Montgomery Preservation, Inc. (MPI) and First Vice President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, I am the officer of two countywide umbrella organizations whose missions include the protection of communities. I've been asked today to talk about the teardown and buildup phenomenon. This is a trend of the last 10 years where houses have been torn down and replaced with much larger houses or houses have had additions built that are much larger than the original house.

Neighbors have often objected to these unplanned changes to their communities because these new buildings are so much larger than existing houses that either the new house seems completely out of place, or the existing houses seem completely out of place as more and more of these large structures are built.

Last summer, I learned of two neighborhoods in Bethesda that were trying to save historic houses that had never been evaluated for historic designation. Builders had bought the properties for more than \$1 million each to demolish and then build two to four large new houses. As President of MPI, I helped one neighborhood save their historic house and have assisted the second neighborhood in negotiations with the builder.

As a result of these actions, I began to think that both the historic preservationists of MPI and the civic activists of the Civic Federation should bring together concerned residents of the county to learn about ways to deal with the challenges of teardowns and buildups. After holding several small events last fall, a conference was organized and held this past April. I've put together a board of information about the conference that you can look at over there.

What I've learned, and even experienced, in my own neighborhood near the Wheaton Metro, is that there are more and more homeowners and builders who want to buy land near Metro stations. They are not particularly interested in the neighborhood, just its proximity to that Metro station. They will then do their teardown or buildup. According to Julia Miller, who has charted the progress of this trend in her neighborhood in the Town of Chevy Chase, other people will start to come in and do the same, often pairing with the first done on a particular street. Before long, the word gets out that a neighborhood is in play, and the pace accelerates, and in a few years, entire streets have been completely changed.

Those who remain may experience loss of tree cover or loss of existing sunlight, increased runoff and even flooding because of ground compaction caused by heavy equipment, and loss of privacy. Those who remain may even become ashamed of their houses, which, while once typical of their community, now appear so small as to be of less value. Property taxes could also skyrocket because of the larger houses.

Lincoln Park and any other community in this county can plan for such changes or they can wait until such change overtakes and perhaps overwhelms them. Historic districts are the best known and most used and experienced in this county. Neighborhoods like Garrett Park are also using an overlay zone that controls lot coverage, setbacks, and floor-area ratio. The City of Annapolis has used conservation districts since 1990 and the City of Rockville is looking to incorporate conservation district principles into its historic districts.

Please realize that dramatic change is coming. The more you plan for it, the better able you will be to be able to make the changes improve your community rather than destroy its character. You can expect to see million dollar properties in Lincoln Park before too long because of its proximity to the Rockville Metro.

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